

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

RANGE PLANTING

(Acre)

CODE 550

DEFINITION

Establishment of adapted, native perennial vegetation such as grasses, forbs, legumes, shrubs, and trees.

PURPOSES

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- Restore a plant community similar to its historic climax or the desired plant community
- Provide or improve forages for livestock
- Provide or improve forage or cover for wildlife
- Reduce erosion by wind and/or water
- Improve water quality and quantity

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

On rangeland, native or naturalized pasture, grazed forest or other suitable location where the principle method of vegetation management will be with herbivores. This practice shall be applied where desirable vegetation is below the acceptable level for natural reseeding to occur, or where the potential for enhancement of the vegetation by grazing management is unsatisfactory.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Species, cultivars or varieties selected must be compatible with management objectives and

adapted to climatic conditions, soils, landscape position, and ecological site(s).

Species, cultivars or varieties selected shall provide adequate cover to control erosion by wind and/or water within an acceptable period of time.

Seedbed preparation, seed/vegetative stock handling, and planting methods will be suitable to meet any special needs for obtaining an acceptable establishment of planted materials.

Planting depths, dates, seeding rates, soil amendments and fertilizer needs for establishment, minimum seed quality standards, and management during the establishment period shall be followed to enhance establishment success.

Seeding rates will be calculated on a pure live seed (PLS) basis.

Additional Criteria to Improve Forages for Livestock

Selection of a species or combination of species shall be designed to meet the desired nutritional and palatability requirements for the kind and class of livestock to be grazed.

Species or combination of species shall meet the planned season of use.

Additional Criteria to Improve Water Quality and Quantity

Species or combination of species shall maintain a stable soil surface and increase infiltration.

Species having high evapotranspiration rates and phreatophytes shall not be planted when watershed yields are the primary objective.

A mixture of shrubs and trees indigenous to the site shall be planted when riparian area, stream

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

bank stability, and water temperature criteria are important. Indigenous herbaceous plants will be used, where woody plants are not components of the natural plant community.

Additional Criteria to Improve Forage or Cover for Wildlife

Planted species shall meet dietary and palatability requirements of the wildlife species of concern. Species shall be selected and plantings designed to meet cover requirements of the wildlife species of concern.

CONSIDERATIONS

Planting materials selected should contribute to wildlife and aesthetics when opportunities exist.

Other practices such as Brush Management, Pest Management, or Cover Crop may be needed to achieve satisfactory site preparation and reduce competition to ensure successful establishment.

Mulching (conservation practice in FOTG Section IV) may be needed to control erosion and protect seedlings from sandblasting and desiccation.

Use of certified seed and planting stock is encouraged, within limitations of logistics and costs.

Consider seed enhancements (i.e., debearding, vernalization, scarification, legume inoculation) to improve success of range plantings.

Native grass plantings have a tendency to develop slowly and may require two to three growing seasons for adequate establishment.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Appropriate forms or worksheets may be used to develop plans, specifications, and documentation for standard plantings. Specialized plantings and those requiring other practices shall include sufficient site-specific information to ensure success of the planting.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Operation: Identify items needed to assist in stand establishment such as mowing, burning, flash grazing and herbicides to control weeds. Address insect and disease control needs where they are likely to create establishment problems.

Maintenance: Monitor new plantings to determine success or failure of stand establishment, keeping in mind that native grass plantings have a tendency to develop slowly. Stand failure should be addressed in a timely manner, through complete reseeding or spot seeding. Thin stands may only need additional grazing deferment during the growing season. Prescribed grazing or Upland/Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management shall be planned to sustain the planting.